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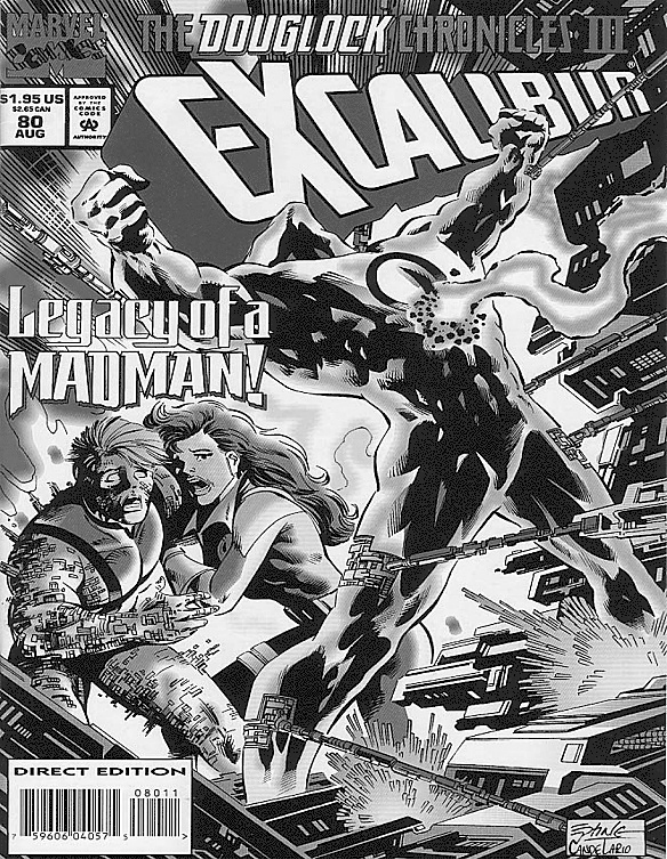
AUG



THE DOUG LOCK CHRONICLES III

EXCALIBUR

Legacy of a MADMAN!



DIRECT EDITION



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FRANK
CANDELARIO



IMAGINE ENCOUNTERING AN ORGANISM WHOSE INNER WORKINGS ARE TOTALLY FOREIGN TO YOU, AND BEING FORCED TO PERFORM COMPLEX SURGERY ON IT.

...WITH YOUR BARE HANDS.

NOW IMAGINE YOU CAN'T SEE WHAT YOU'RE DOING...

...AND THAT THE OPERATING ROOM IS BEING COLLATERATED BY A DOZEN EXPLOSIONS PER SECOND.

IT WOULD BE A DIFFICULT TASK IN THE BEST OF TIMES, BUT FOR THE CRITICAL LIFESONN CALLED ZERO...

FOR HIS "SURGEON" SHADOWCAT, AND HER TEAMMATES IN THE MUTANT SUPERHERO GROUP EXCALIBUR.

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MY SYSTEMS INTEGRITY IS RESTORED.

YOUR PHASING POWER CAN NOW RENDER THE DESTRUCT UNIT INERT.

YOU HAVE MY THANKS, SHADOWCAT!!!

SAVE YOUR GRATITUDE, ROBOT!

YOU ARE THE REASON THIS FAMILY WAS SUMMONED ACROSS AN OCEAN TO THESE SHORES FOR SOME MYSTERIOUS PURPOSE!

YOU ARE THE ONE WHO BROUGHT US TO THIS DYING BASE--BECAUSE YOU THOUGHT IT WOULD BE SAFE!!

YOU ARE THE REASON THIS FAMILY HAS BECOME ENDOLED IN ONE PERILOUS SITUATION AFTER ANOTHER.

NOW YOU CLAIM TO HOLD THE SECRET OF THE DEADLY LEGACY VIRUS--

--A DISEASE THAT THREATENS TO WIPE OUT EVERY MUTANT ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH--

--WE'RE DOING OUR BEST TO SAVE YOUR CIRCUITS FROM SELF-DESTRUCTION!

NOW, PLEASE--THE SECRET! OUT WITH IT!

IT'S TRUE--I DO HOLD KEY KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE DISEASE--

...KNOWLEDGE I WASN'T EVEN AWARE I POSSESSED UNTIL MINUTES AGO.

BUT I STILL CANNOT INTERPRET THE DATA--IN OUR OWN TIME, STRYFE, MY DEAD MASTER, WAS THE HEIR OF APOCALYPSE--A MAN PRACTICED IN THE ARTS OF CRUELTY.

YES, HE ENCLOSED THE SECRET OF THE VIRUS IN MY DATA BANKS--BUT THE FILE IS TOTALLY INACCESSIBLE!



PROFESSOR
XAVIER! SUCH
DESPAIR—OVER-
POWERING MY PSYCHIC
DEFENSES, MY MIND!
I THOUGHT YOU
WERE IN GRAVE
DANGER!

I'M SORRY, KURT
I WAS SO LOST IN
THOUGHT, I DIDN'T
REALIZE YOU'D RETURNED
TO THE ISLAND...

...AND THINKING
MYSELF ALONE, I
LEFT MY THOUGHTS
UNGUARDED. I SHOULD
HAVE KNOWN
BETTER.

A TELEPATH
HAS RESPONSIBILITIES,
YOU KNOW.

I SHOULD HAVE
ANTICIPATED... SHOULD
NEVER HAVE LET MY
GUARD DOWN...

I SHOULD
HAVE KNOWN
BETTER.

HERR
PROFESSOR...
CHARLES...

JUST TELL
ME WHAT'S
THE MATTER.

IT'S SUCH A SMALL THING—A DETAIL—
REALLY, A MINOR CHANGE AT POSITIVE
26 IN THE MOLECULAR CONFIGURATION
WE SEE HERE.

EXCEPT THIS
MOLECULE PERTAINS
TO THE LEGACY
VIRUS...

AND THE CHANGE
MEANS THE VIRUS IS
NOW SPREADING TO
THE HUMAN
POPULATION.

MEIN
GOTT.



BUT PROFESSOR, SURELY THERE MUST BE--

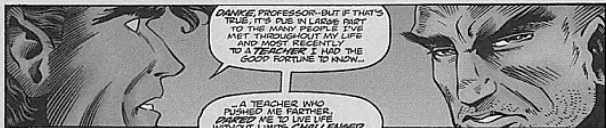
HOW DO YOU DO IT, KURT?

HERE I AM STARING AT THE BOYS, AND I FEEL MYSELF DROWNING...

... BUT YOU'VE LIVED YOUR WHOLE LIFE AT THE EDGE OF SUCH DARKNESS, FACING HATRED AND FEAR SHARPLY BE CAUSE OF YOUR APPEARANCE...

... AND YET, IN ALL THE YEARS SINCE I FIRST MET YOU AND BROUGHT YOU TO JOIN THE X-MEN, I'VE NEVER KNOWN YOU TO GIVE IN TO DESPAIR OR EVEN A TRACE OF BITTERNESS.

NO ONE BETTER EMBODIES THE SPIRIT THE X-MEN SEEK TO INSPIRE IN ALL MUTANTKIND.



DANKE, PROFESSOR--BUT IF THAT'S TRUE, IT'S DUE IN LARGE PART TO THE MANY PEOPLE I'VE MET THROUGHOUT MY LIFE AND MOST RECENTLY TO A TEACHER I HAD THE GOOD FORTUNE TO KNOW...

... A TEACHER WHO PUSHED ME FARTHER, DARED ME TO LIVE LIFE WITHOUT LIMITS, CHALLENGED ME TO FIGHT THE IMPOSSIBLE FIGHT--



--WHETHER AGAINST DECADES OF PREJUDICE, OR MUTANT-HUNTING SENTINELS, OR--

--OR AN INCURABLE DISEASE?

WHO'S THE TEACHER NOW, KURT?



I WOULDN'T PRESUME TO TEACH YOU ANYTHING, CHARLES. IT'S JUST THAT I HAVE FAITH IN YOU... AND MOST OF ALL FAITH IN GOD.

I HOPE YOUR FAITH IN ME ISN'T MISPLACED.

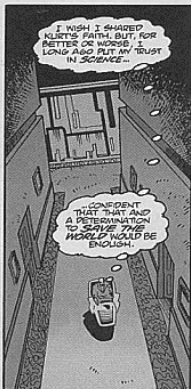


NEIN, NEIN-- I DON'T BELIEVE THAT FOR A SECOND WE'VE COME TOO FAR, FOUGHT FOR THE DREAM TOO LONG, TO LET A SILENT KILLER TAKE IT ALL AWAY.

TOGETHER, WE'LL ALL FIND A WAY TO REBT THIS THING. I'M JUST PRAYING WE WILL FIND THE WAY SOON.

KURT... THANK YOU... AND WHATEVER YOU DO...

...KEEP PRAYING.



I WISH I SHARED KURT'S FAITH, BUT, FOR BETTER OR WORSE, I LONG AGO PUT MY TRUST IN SCIENCE...

CONSENT THAT THAT AND A DETERMINATION TO SAVE THE WORLD WOULD BE ENOUGH.



MOIRA AND I BOTH FELT SO SURE OF OURSELVES. WE WERE YOUNG AND SO MUCH IN LOVE WITH OUR DREAM... AND EACH OTHER.

NOW MOIRA LIES EXHAUSTED, BONE WEARY FROM THE SEARCH FOR A CURE THAT WE'RE NOWHERE CLOSE TO.

AND I...



I USED TO THINK I COULD SAVE THE WORLD.

I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER.

WHILE IN STRYFE'S UNDERGROUND BASE...

HRRLUONE!

THERE! WITH THE GATE REACHED, THIS EXHAUST TUNNEL SHOULD PROVIDE RELATIVE SAFETY FROM THE DESTRUCTION--

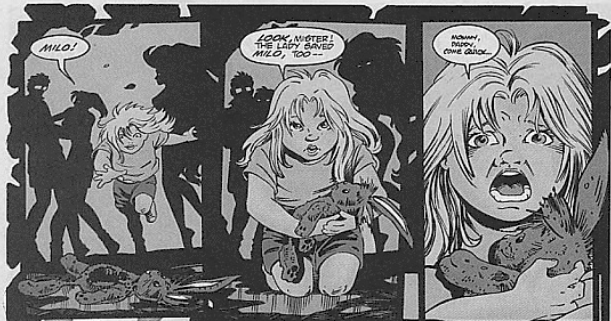
SKRUUNK

--WHILE THE OTHERS SALVAGE WHAT DATA THEY CAN FROM STRYFE'S COMPUTERS!

WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR, ZERO?

ANYTHING THAT MIGHT SAVE US--OR PROVIDE THE KEY TO THE LEGACY VIRUS DATA--BEFORE THIS SYSTEM SHUTS CIRCUIT--

BOOM



MUIR
ISLAND.

GORGEOUS,
ISN'T IT?

THE SUNSET THERE'S
BRILL. SOME SOOT IN THE
AIR FROM THE OIL RIG
EXPLOSION A FEW MONTHS
BACK--BAD FOR BREATHING,
BUT IT MAKES FOR GREAT
SUNSETS.

SORRY?

I HADN'T
NOTICED.

I'LL BET YOU
DIDN'T EVEN
HEAR ME COME
IN.

IS THERE
SOMETHING I
CAN HELP YOU
WITH, AMANDA?

ACTUALLY,
I WAS THINKING
MAYBE I COULD
HELP YOU, RORY.
BELIEVE IT OR NOT,
I KNOW WHAT
YOU'RE GOING
THROUGH.

I NEVER
SAID I HAD.
I MERELY
SAID THAT I
KNOW WHAT
YOU'RE GOING
THROUGH.

MISS SEFTON, I BARELY
KNOW YOU, BUT I THINK IT'S
SAFE TO SAY THAT EVEN IN
YOUR SCORCIOUS LIFE YOU'VE
NEVER EXPERIENCED WHAT
I'M FACING.

IN ISSUE
#73,--SURE

...NAMESLY, YOU'RE WORRIED THAT,
SOMETIME IN THE NOT-TOO-DISTANT
FUTURE YOU'LL BECOME THE OBT-
SESSED MUTANT-HUNTER CALLED
ANAB!

HOW
COULD
YOU--??

I WAS THERE, REMEMBER?
I WAS BUSY THEN - SWITCHING
PHOENIX AND BRITANNIC TRUE*.

...BUT NOT SO
BUSY I DIDN'T SEE
THE SAME VISION IN
THE TIMESTREAM
THAT YOU SAW.

IF YOU "KNOW" SO MUCH,
THEN TELL ME -- CAN I DO
ANYTHING ABOUT IT?

NO MAN SHOULD KNOW
HIS OWN DESTINY... MUCH LESS THAT
HE'S FATED TO BECOME A MURDERER
ON A PAR WITH HITLER!

I'VE ALWAYS
MADE MY WAY
THROUGH LIFE BY
TAKING MATTERS INTO
MY OWN HANDS --

-- ONLY TO DISCOVER
THAT, NO MATTER WHAT
I DO, THOSE HANDS ARE
ALREADY COVERED IN
BLOOD.

* IN FATEFUL
75, --
SUZE AGAIN

...IS LOOK
OUTSIDE.

YOU'VE SEEN
MORE THAN YOU
SHOULD HAVE. THAT'S
TRUE. BUT YOU'RE STILL
BLIND TO A GREATER
TRUTH, WHEN ALL YOU
HAVE TO DO...

YOU AND I SEE A
SUNSET-- BUT AT
THIS VERY MOMENT, IN
ANOTHER PART
OF THE WORLD, IT'S
SUNRISE.

TIME IS NOT
ABSOLUTE. YOU MIGHT
BECOME A HARBOR, OR YOU
MIGHT NOT. I CAN'T
SAY FOR SURE -- AND
NEITHER CAN YOU.

ALL WE CAN
DO IS LIVE ONE
DAY AT A
TIME...

...AND SAVOR
EVERY PRECIOUS
MINUTE. WE ARE
GIVEN.

STRIFE'S
BASE.

YOUR TIME GROWS SHORT. THIS BASE
NO LONGER SERVES ANY USEFUL PUR-
POSE FOR YOU. YOU MUST LEAVE HERE
BEFORE THE SELF-DESTRUCT
SEQUENCE ENTERS ITS FINAL
PHASE!!!

HOLD ON--
YOU SOUND LIKE
YOU'RE NOT
COMING!

THIS UNIT MUST REMAIN
BEHIND TO MANUALLY RE-
DIRECT THE BLAST SEQUENCE--

--LEST THE FINAL DETONATIONS OBLITERATE
THE SURFACE AND ALL ITS INHABITANTS FOR A
7-MILE RADIUS--INCLUDING YOU.

BUT ZERO... SUCH A COURSE
OF ACTION IS CERTAIN TO
PERMANENTLY TERMINATE
YOUR LIFE FUNCTIONS.

THIS UNIT WAS NEVER
ALIVE, DOWDLOCK. THIS
UNIT KNOWS THAT NOW.

JUST A CLEVER
IMITATION.

JUST A
MACHINE.

AND THE
LEGACY VIRUS
DATA
HIDDEN
INSIDE
YOU--?

--IS INACCESSIBLE AND THERE-
FORE USELESS ANYWAY.

NOW
GO!!!

COURTNEY!!

COURTNEY,
FOR GOD'S
SAKE-- COME
BACK!!





THE BASE
MUST'VE BEEN
DIRECTLY BENEATH
IT, JUST AS
MEGGAN
AND ZERO--

--WE'RE SMACK
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE
PENTAGON!

I HAVE SECURED YOUR
SAFETY. THERE MAY STILL
BE TIME TO SAVE ZERO. HE
IS IN GRAVE DANGER! I
MUST RETURN TO THE BASE
ASSIST IN HIS RESCUE--

HON... CAN YOU THINK THAT
WAY? I MEAN, I THOUGHT YOU
WERE PROGRAMMED FOR SELF-
PRESERVATION... RIGHT?

SO HOW COULD YOU
EVEN THINK TO ACT
SELFLESSLY?

AND BELOW, AT
THAT MOMENT...

"HELLO, ZERO--MY
'FAITHFUL FRIEND,'"

STRYFE?!!!
THIS IS
IMPOSS--

NO!!!
NOT
NOW!!!
NOT
LIKE
THIS!!!

"IF YOU'RE HEARING THIS
MESSAGE, IT MEANS I AM
DEAD, MY LEGACY IS
SWEEPING THE WORLD..."

"...AND YOUR INEVITABLE, PITIFUL
ATTEMPT AT SENTIENT AWARE-
NESS HAS LED YOU TO A SELFLESS
ACT THAT IN MOMENTS WILL
DESTROY YOU."

"SO HERE'S A LITTLE GOING
AWAY PRESENT."

"AS OF THIS MOMENT, I'M REMOVING THE LAST
PROGRAMMING BLOCKS TO YOUR SENTIENCE. I'M
GRANTING YOU FULL AWARENESS --

"--PLUS FULL ACCESS TO THE DATA
THAT MIGHT EVENTUALLY HAVE LED
TO A CURE FOR THE VIRUS--IF ONLY
YOU HAD MORE TIME."

"CONGRATULATIONS!
YOU'RE HUMAN..."

DOUGLOCK!

THERE MUST BE
SOME WAY TO--

I HAVE
RETURNED
TO ASSIST--

"...FOR THE NEXT
6 SECONDS."

NO TIME TO
EXPLAIN !!!

SHAKO

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS 00
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"OH, AND THAT **DESOLATION** YOU'RE FEELING RIGHT ABOUT NOW, ZERO? ENJOY IT--

"--THAT'S WHAT BEING **HUMAN** IS ALL ABOUT."

OO OI WHAT JUST TRANSPIRED?



STRYFE... YOU'RE WRONG.

WHAT?

NO TIME-- JUST GO, DOUG!



NOW!! YOU'VE SO MUCH TO ACHIEVE!

KFOOM

DOUG-- REMEMBER ME.



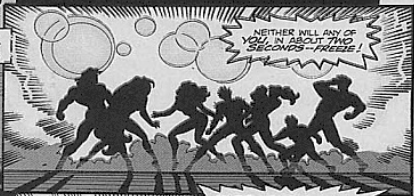
"YOUR LIFE HAS BEEN A WASTE, ZERO. I'VE SEEN TO THAT, AND NO ONE CAN CHANGE IT."

"NO ONE WILL BEAR WITNESS AS YOUR CIRCUITS FUSE AND TURN TO SLAG. NO ONE WILL MOURN. NO ONE WILL REMEMBER."



"NO ONE."

"END RECORDING."



MUIR ISLAND.

KURT'S PEP TALK WORKED
WONDERS. I HAVEN'T FELT
THIS ENERGIZED IN WEEKS.

WE WILL BEAT
THIS DISEASE-- IF
ONLY BECAUSE ONCE
MOIRA SETS HER MIND
ON SOMETHING, IT'S
NEAR IMPOSSIBLE
TO PETER HER.

I CAN'T THINK
OF ANYTHING THAT
WOULD STOP HER--OR
ME. WE'RE IN THIS FIGHT
TO STAY.

MOIRA? YOU'RE
AWAKE? LISTEN,
I'VE BEEN
THINKING...

...WHAT IF WE DESIGNED
A MOLECULAR MIMIC OF THE
CELL RECEPTORS THAT THE VIRUS
TARGETS? IF IN AN INFECTED PERSON'S
BLOODSTREAM, IT COULD ACT AS
AN ANTI-LEGACY
SPONGE...

I DON'T EVEN
KNOW, CHARLES.
IT MAY HAVE BEEN
MY FAULT.

I--I DON'T
FOLLOW...

MAYBE BECAUSE I GAVE BIRTH TO A MUTANT.
I'M MORE SUSCEPTIBLE. OR MAYBE IT
WAS THE AUTOPSY I PERFORMED ON
ILLYANA...

MOIRA...

...I DIDN'T
EVEN THINK TO
ASK... THE CELLS
FROM THE INFECTED
HUMAN...



...WHAT REALLY MATTERS IS NOT
"BEST" OR "WORST," BUT HOW
PRECIOUS LITTLE TIME THEY MAY
HAVE LEFT!

STAN LEE PRESENTS
EXCALIBUR
IN THE FINAL CHAPTER OF
**THE DOUGLOCK
TRILOGY**

OUT OF TIME

SCOTT LOBDELL plot • CHRIS COOPER script
AMANDA CONNOR pencils • HARRY CANDELAIO,
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DAVE SHARPE letters • CHRIS MATTHYS colors
suzanne gaffney, editor • bob harras, group
editor • tom defalco, editor in chief

SHVOOM

HURRY, SHADONCAT!
IF THIS UNDERGROUND
BASE WAS SWITCHED
TO SELF-DESTRUCT
MODE!!!

!!! THEN THE DESTRUCT MECHANISM
PLACED WITHIN ME BY MY LATE MASTER...
IS SOON TO FOLLOW! YOU MUST... PROBE
DEEPER... UNTIL YOU FIND IT!

BUT MY PHASING
POWER DISRUPTS
ELECTRONICS! YOUR SYSTEMS
ARE FRYING AS IT IS!

I CAN... ENDURE IT!
CONTINUE... FARTHER TO
YOUR LEFT... YES... I
HAVE IT! PHASE IT FREE,
QUICKLY!

SHVOOM

BUT WHO WILL
PROTECT SHADONCAT?
EH, MEGAN? SHE RISKS
HER LIFE FOR THAT
MACHINE!

"THAT MACHINE" IS
SENTIENT,
BARKING - ELSE
I WOULD NOT SENSE THE
GREAT PAIN THIS
PROCEDURE IS CAUSING
HIM!

THEY WILL
BOTH SURVIVE
THIS -- THEY MUST!







MEGGS,
WHAT ARE YOU
SAYING? HOW ARE
YOU DOING...

THOUGH, I ADMIT,
I AM A BIT
SURPRISED THE
LAVA LISTENED

BECAUSE
I TOLD
IT TO.

YOUR
HANDS--!

IT WOULD SEEM
THAT NOT ONLY DOES
MY ENVIRONMENT
AFFECT MY BODY...

—BUT THAT, IN MY
PRESENT STATE, I CAN
AFFECT THE ENVIRONMENT
IN TURN.